

Deception Pass State Park Alternatives for Overnight Accommodation

An Explanatory Introduction

Thank you for your interest in Deception Pass State Park and our planning process! Washington State Parks involves park users, neighbors, and others who care about our parks in all our major planning efforts. We are convinced that we make better decisions when we listen to those people who know and love the parks best.

This Deception Pass planning process and its project objectives are somewhat unusual. Thus, the documents for you to review definitely need some explanation. Below is that explanation.

Objectives of the Planning Process

In 2001, Washington State Parks adopted a Master Plan for Deception Pass State Park. Park objectives were established in that plan, and are provided to you as a separate file on this web page. A \$40 million-plus park development, redevelopment, and preservation program was also proposed in the Master Plan. In the years since, the agency has been working to implement the plan. It is a daunting task and will continue on for many years. And it won't be done exactly as originally conceived either, since master plans set only general direction. Over time, they are always tweaked and refined.

This 2006 planning project is designed to address the issue of overnight accommodations in the 2001 Master Plan. The project has the following objectives:

1. To explore a broad range of potential overnight accommodations, both traditional camping, as well as indoor accommodations, in order to:
 - a. Educate the public, staff and the Parks and Recreation Commission about the environmental, recreational, and economic choices of each type of facility, and
 - b. Provide desired recreational opportunities.
2. To identify an optimum mix of overnight accommodations that are:
 - a. Environmentally sound,
 - b. Fiscally feasible,
 - c. Responsive to public desires for recreational opportunities, and
 - d. Consistent with the mission and objectives of the park and agency.

Scope of Project

There are several factors and events shaping the project's objectives. In 2005, Washington State Parks purchased the private Sunrise RV Resort. The 2001 Master Plan called for this purchase and identified general uses for the site, including a modernized campground. In the same year, the Parks and Recreation Commission asked parks staff to review the Environmental Learning Center program and determine on a site-by-site basis appropriate ways to modernize the aging facilities statewide. The Cornet Bay ELC lies immediately adjacent to the Sunrise Resort property at Deception Pass State Park.

In recent years, the agency has been part of two nationwide trends in park management. First, development of cabins, yurts and other indoor accommodations has been growing as demographic and other social forces have prompted increasing demand for the recreational experiences those types of facilities provide. Second, there has been increasing demand on park agencies to provide recreational opportunities, preserve natural and cultural resources, and do it all with less reliance on the general taxpayer. Thus, exploring opportunities for partnerships and other types of collaborative efforts with organizations outside of Washington State Parks has become an increasing part of our planning efforts.

The Alternatives Stage of the Planning Process

At this stage, the planning team presents potential alternative approaches to address as many considerations as possible. No preferred alternative is established; rather this is an opportunity to understand the range of possibilities to achieve the project's objectives.

The alternatives stage is an educational opportunity for all who wish to participate. Three alternative approaches are presented. Thematically, the approaches can be generally described as follows:

Option A: Facilities provided closely resemble the existing mix of facilities at Deception Pass and throughout most of the State Parks system. Financing, also, is traditional, with all capital and operating funding coming from either the general taxpayer of the State of Washington, or from user fees (camping or ELC fees).

Option B: Facilities provided expand considerably the range of experiences available at Deception Pass. A lodge is developed as are various cabin sites. The financing of this option eliminates the cost to the general taxpayer of both development and operation of new facilities.

Option C: Facilities provided expand considerably the range of experiences available at Deception Pass. A different mix of type and location of indoor facilities distinguishes this option from Option B. The financing of this option reduces significantly, but does not

eliminate, the cost to the general taxpayer of both development and operation of facilities.

What is vital to understand as one looks at the options, is that they are not mutually exclusive. That is, there may be some elements one likes in one option and others in another option. **Your preferences can be mixed and matched.** For example, you might like the notion of providing certain facilities from Option B, but financed in an Option A style - or vice versa.

As you look at the alternatives graphically, there are also accompanying financial analyses that indicate the relative costs and revenues likely for each development and operations element. State Parks is asking for your advice, as we try to understand the choices between experiences provided, resources protected, and the public costs of doing so.

The Three Concept Options

Option A: All developments would be constructed and operated by State Parks.

Sunrise/Cornet Bay—The ELC function at the Cornet Bay sub-area would remain but all structures, other than CCC-era remnants, would be replaced. A centrally located complex of dining/Food & Beverage and meeting/classroom space to be sharable with a rebuilt and expanded high-quality RV park would also be constructed. The Administrative/Maintenance base would be relocated in the northwest corner at the Island Grill site (true of all options).

Bowman Bay and West Beach – No new developments.

East Cranberry – Construction of a New Visitor Orientation Center would occur with a re-aligned entrance roadway.

Option B: All developments, other than the orientation center, would be constructed and operated by non-State Parks entities.

Sunrise/Cornet Bay: Development of principally an RV campground would occur, with associated cabins of sufficient number to accommodate groups of 80 people. Cabins would be reservable for groups during off-peak times

Bowman Bay Lodge: A lodge location would be identified with attributes that would maximize its financial return, consistent with overall park natural and cultural resource management objectives. The attributes would include conference facilities and dining facilities, each of which would be analyzed for financial contribution to the entire project. Day use recreational access across site would be assured.

West Beach – No new development would be proposed.

East Cranberry – Construction of a new Visitor Orientation Center, with re-aligned entrance roadway would occur, plus cabins in the area north of the Civilian Conservation Corps cultural landscape, with a re-aligned entrance roadway.

Option C: All developments would be constructed and operated by non-State Parks entities, other than the orientation center and East Cranberry tent campsites.

Sunrise/Cornet Bay: Development of an RV campground over entire site would occur, with highway-oriented uses developed as appropriate. All development would be constructed and operated by the private sector.

Bowman Bay Cabins: Cabin locations and attributes would be identified to maximize the financial return on investment, consistent with overall park natural and cultural resource management objectives. Day use recreational access across the site would be assured.

West Beach: Cranberry Cabins – Cabins would be constructed in the woods (but not a lodge on the beach). This might displace up to 50% of the existing tent camping to the east. These tent camping sites would be replaced at the East Cranberry Lake site.

East Cranberry – Construction of a New Visitor Orientation Center would occur, with re-aligned entrance roadway, plus non-RV campsites in the area north of the Civilian Conservation Corps cultural landscape, with a re-aligned entrance roadway.

The Attachments

Concept plans for each of the options is graphically presented in several other attachments on the web page. In addition, the financial analysis of each option is presented as an attachment for your review and comment.

How to Comment and Participate in the Planning Process

You are encouraged to attend the September 12, 2006 public workshop taking place from 7 pm to 9 pm at the Cornet Bay ELC multipurpose room. If you cannot make that meeting, please provide any questions or comments to Daniel Farber, Parks Planner, at the contact locations provided on the web page. If you have a group of people interested in the park project who would like an additional meeting with park staff, please arrange one with Daniel. And be sure to keep checking the web page or contact Daniel about the next stage of the process, where a preliminary staff recommendation will first go to the public for another workshop, and general comment period, prior to going to the Parks and Recreation Commission for action.